

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

February 23, 2017

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Governor's H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFORE

Corey Keaton, East Hartford, CT

Good afternoon Senator Osten and Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Corey Keaton and I am a registered voter in East Hartford.

I am here to testify in opposition to the proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

I was first diagnosed in 1999 as having manic depression. I was having a hard time getting along with my family. It was so bad that when I had a baby, my parents didn't want to go and meet the baby. I was not motivated at all, couldn't work, and substance abuse was a normal part of life. I joined a gang, which I was part of for two years. Things got worse for me as the years went by, and the substance use got worse. I had a case manager, but I wasn't compliant. I didn't take my meds, then finally I broke down and lashed out on my dad, which led to my incarceration of 3 ½ years. I didn't mean to do what I did - it was the mental illness and neglect that got the best of me.

For the last eight years, InterCommunity has helped me with the adversity that I face every day, showing me that my condition doesn't define me. It took time and a lot of buy-in, but I stuck with it, and they stuck with me. Today I am working and am pleased with my progress with my condition. It still takes work, but I can do more. With the stability at Common Ground at InterCommunity, I am able to conquer every day's challenges. InterCommunity has shown me that guidance and structure can really improve your situation. I am proud of my progress and I am glad that I am independent and I know that I couldn't have done this without the help of InterCommunity.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my lived experience with you about what this means to me, my family and the people I care about!